

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 INRE-00 ARAE-00 CIAE-00

PM-03 H-02 INR-07 L-02 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01

SP-02 SS-15 AID-05 PC-01 SY-05 A-01 OPR-02 CU-02

OMB-01 EB-07 COME-00 AGR-05 /078 W
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O 231849Z APR 75

FM AMEMBASSY TEGUCIGALPA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC NIACT IMMEDIATE 9846

INFO DIA WASHDC IMMEDIATE

USIA WASHDC IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY GUATEMALA IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY MANAGUA IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY SAN JOSE IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY SAN SALVADOR IMMEDIATE

USCINCSO IMMEDIATE

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE SECTION 1 OF 2 TEGUCIGALPA 1624

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, MORG, HO

SUBJECT: REACTION TO REMOVAL TO LOPEZ

REF: TEGUCIGALPA 1614

1. THE FIRST PUBLISHED REACTIONS TO LOPEZ' REMOVAL AS CHIEF OF STATE APPEARED IN AFTERNOON NEWSPAPERS OF APRIL 22. LA NOTICIA CARRIED LARGE HEADLINES BUT ITS COVERAGE WAS LIMITED TO A REPRINT OF THE ARMED FORCES DECLARATION. EL DIA HEADLINED THE NEWS BUT ALSO PROVIDED COMMENTARY AND INTERVIEWS. IN A PAGE ONE STORY, EL DIA SPECULATED THAT LOPEZ' REFUSAL TO AUTHORIZE THE INVESTIGATING COMMISSION TO REVIEW HIS BANK ACCOUNTS HAD "ACCELERATED THE PROCESS" OF REMOVAL THAT HAD BEGUN MARCH 31 WHEN THE GENERAL WAS REPLACED
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AS ARMED FORCES CHIEF. EL DIA SAID THAT GIVEN THE EVENTS OF THE PAST SEVERAL WEEKS THE NEWS OF THE OUSTER WAS NOT A SHOCK AND THAT THE PUBLIC EXPECTED THE GENERAL'S REMOVAL SOONER OR LATER.

2. EL DIA PUBLISHED AN INTERVIEW WITH CARLOS ROBERTO REINA, LEADER OF THE DEMOCRATIC LEFT FACTION OF THE LIBERAL PARTY, WHO EXPRESSED THE VIEW THAT LOPEZ' FALL RESULTED FROM THE ASSUMPTION OF CONTROL OF THE MILITARY BY YOUNG LT. COLONELS AND THE UB SCANDAL. HE STATED THAT THE GOH INVESTIGATING COMMISSION WILL NOW HAVE GREATER LIBERTY TO PURSUE THE FACTS IN THE BRIBERY CASE. REINA BELIEVES THAT THE CURRENT MILITARY GOVERNMENT "HAS ITS ORIGIN IN THE POWER OF THE LT. COLONELS" WHO HAVE DEFINED A POLICY WHICH INTENDS TO "CLEAN THE GOOD NAME OF THE ARMED FORCES AND TO FORM A REGIME THAT WILL ELIMINATE CORRUPTION." EL DIA QUOTES REINA AS SAYING THE LT. COLONELS MERIT THE PEOPLES' SUPPORT.

3. EL DIA ALSO QUOTED JOSE PINEDA GOMEZ, PRESIDENT OF THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE OF THE LIBERAL PARTY, AS SAYING THAT WITH LOPEZ' OUSTER, THE OBSTACLE TO A RETURN TO DEMOCRATIC PROCESS HAS BEEN REMOVED. PINEDA SAID THAT THE CHANGE WAS NECESSARY AND THAT HE CREDITED THE RECENT JOINT DECLARATION OF THE LIBERAL AND NATIONALIST PARTIES AS HAVING INFLUENCED THE MILITARY'S DECISION.

4. THE APRIL 23 EL CRONISTA'S LEAD STORY BY GERARDO ALFREDO MEDRANO WAS AN ANALYSIS OF THE PROBLEMS FACED BY THE NEW GOVERNMENT. MEDRANO PAINTED A PESSIMISTIC PICTURE OF THE COUNTRY'S ECONOMIC SITUATION AND SAID THAT THE GOH MUST PROVE THAT IT HAS CAPACITY AND CONFIDENCE AND THAT IT MUST ATTRACT THE MOST TALENTED PEOPLE IN THE SOCIETY TO SERVE IN PUBLIC POSITIONS.

5. THE HEADLINES OF TIEMPO'S APRIL 23 EDITION SAID "LOPEZ PREFERRED HIS REMOVAL TO REVEALING HIS BANK ACCOUNTS:" INVESTIGATING COMMITTEE'S PUBLIC DECLARATION WAS "CERTIFICATE OF REMOVAL" OF LOPEZ AS CHIEF OF STATE." THE INNER PAGE STORY SAID THAT THE INVESTIGATING COMMISSION WENT THROUGH LENGTHY DELIBERATIONS APRIL 21
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BEFORE DECIDING TO MAKE PUBLIC LOPEZ' REFUSAL TO AUTHORIZE EXAMINATION OF HIS BANK ACCOUNTS, REALIZING THAT THE NEWS WOULD MEAN THE END OF THE GENERAL'S TENURE AS CHIEF OF STATE. TIEMPO QUOTED "SOURCES CLOSE TO LOPEZ" AS SAYING THAT RATHER THAN DISCLOSE HIS FINANCES, LOPEZ PREFERRED TO LOSE THE POSITION OF CHIEF OF STATE. THE "SOURCES" ALSO SAID THAT LOPEZ REGARDED THE REQUEST BY THE COMMISSION TO INVESTIGATE HIS ACCOUNTS AS BEING "INJURIOUS TO HIS PERSONAL HONOR."

6. TIEMPO'S LEAD EDITORIAL OF APRIL 23 IS ENTITLED "THE CLOSE OF A POLITICAL ERA" AND SUPPORTS THE THESIS

THAT THERE MUST NOW BE A "NEW POLITICS" FOR HONDURAS. TIEMPO SAYS THE ERRORS OF THE PAST MUST BE CAREFULLY ANALYZED AND THAT HONEST AND CAPABLE MEN BE FOUND WHO CAN BREAK WITH THE PAST. IF THIS IS NOT DONE, THE RECENT CHANGE OF CHIEF OF STATE HAS LITTLE REAL MEANING.

7. LA PRENSA OF APRIL 23 CARRIES HEADLINES READING "NEW CHIEF OF STATE RECEIVES TOTAL SUPPORT." ITS LEAD EDITORIAL COMMENTS ON THE LIKELY TRUTH OF THE BRIBERY STORY AS PUBLISHED BY THE WALL STREET JOURNAL AND SAYS THAT THE RECENT CHANGE OF CHIEF OF STATE SATISFIES THE NATION'S ASPIRATIONS OF NOT CONTINUING TO BEAR THE SHAME OF HAVING AS ITS GOVERNOR A MAN WHO HAD DISHONORED THE NATION. LA PRENSA IDENTIFIED MELGAR AS "AN HONEST CITIZEN OF DEMOCRATIC IDEAS WITH INCLINATIONS NEITHER TO THE LEFT NOR TO THE RIGHT."

8. LA PRENSA PRINTED INTERVIEWS WITH LIBERAL PARTY POLITICIAN MAX VELASQUEZ DIAZ AND NATIONAL PARTY POLITICIANS NICOLAS CRUZ TORRES, RAMON ERNESTO CRUZ (EX PRESIDENT) AND EUGENIO MATUTE CANIZALES. ALL EXPRESSED APPROVAL OF LOPEZ' OUSTER AND THE HOPE THAT IT WILL BE THE FIRST STEP IN RETURNING TO A CONSTITUTIONAL GOVERNMENT.

9. A MEETING WAS CALLED BY THE FEDERATION OF HONDURAN UNIVERSITY STUDENTS (FEUH) FOR 4:00 P.M. ON APRIL 22 IN DOWNTOWN TEGUCIGALPA TO PROTEST UB CASE AND YANKEE IMPERIALISM. THE STUDENT LEADERS MET WITH POLICE OFFICIALS PRIOR TO MEETING.
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THE POLICE TOLD STUDENTS

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O 231849Z APR 75

FM AMEMBASSY TEGUCIGALPA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC NIACT IMMEDIATE 9847
INFO DIA WASHDC IMMEDIATE
USIA WASHDC IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY GUATEMALA IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY MANAGUA IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY SAN JOSE IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY SAN SALVADOR IMMEDIATE

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THAT THEY COULD HOLD MEETING IN AGREED UPON SITE BUT
COULD NOT MOVE FROM SITE OR CAUSE DISTURBANCES. THE
STUDENT LEADERS AGREED TO STIPULATIONS. AT A MAXIMUM,
NOT MORE THAN 500 PEOPLE, MANY TEENAGE GIRLS, ATTENDED
MEETING. OUTSIDE OF A CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATIC UNIVERSITY
GROUP (DCU), MOST OF THE OTHER ORGANIZATIONS THAT SUPPORTED
MEETING ARE COMMUNIST OR COMMUNIST CONTROLLED. THE
MAJOR THEME OF THE SPEECHES WAS A DEMAND THAT THE
GOVERNMENT EXPROPRIATE UNITED BRANDS AND STANDARD FRUIT.
THEY ALSO UOYED THE GOVERNMENT TO INITIATE AN IMMEDIATE
STUDY OF ALL FOREIGN COMPANY CONCESSIONS IN MINING,
PETROLEUM, ETC. THE ORATORS ALSO CALLED ON THE GOVERNMENT
TO PUNISH ALL THOSE INVOLVED IN THE SCANDAL. THE
DEMONSTRATION FINISHED PEACEFULLY AND THERE WAS NO
ATTEMPT TO MARCH TO THE EMBASSY OR OTHER U.S. INSTALLA-
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TIONS.

10. MEDIA REPORTS STATE THAT PANAMA, GUATEMALA AND
NICARAGUA HAVE RECOGNIZED THE NEW GOVERNMENT.

11. MISSION SOURCES REPORT THAT COLONEL POLICARPO PAZ
GARCIA WILL BE CHIEF OF THE ARMED FORCES, AND THAT LT.
COLONEL FRANCISCO RUIZ ANDRADE WILL BE HEAD OF THE POLICE
FORCE (FSP). SAME SOURCES REPORT THAT LT. COLONEL MARIO
FONSECA LOPEZ WILL BE THIRD BATTALION COMMANDER IN SAN PEDRO
SULA, AND LT. COLONEL GERARDO WILDT YATES WILL BE DIRECTOR OF
THE FRANCISCO MORAZAN MILITARY ACADENA.

COMMENT: AS COULD BE EXPECTED, THERE ARE A MULTITUDE
OF RUMORS CIRCULATING ABOUT WHO WILL BE NAMED TO MINISTERIAL
POSITION. CERTAINLY SOME OF THE INDIVIDUALS INVOLVED ARE HELPING
TO CIRCULATE THOSE RUMORS IN HOPES THAT IT WILL HELP THEIR
CHANCES. HOWEVER, UP TILL NOON ON APRIL 23, THERE HAS BEEN NO
OFFICIAL ANNOUNCEMENT ABOUT CABINET APPOINTMENTS. FURTHERMORE,
THERE HAS BEEN NO ANNOUNCEMENT ABOUT WHO WILL BE THE NEW
CHIEF OF THE ARMED FORCES. IT IS CLEAR THE SUPERIOR DEFENSE

COUNCIL HAS DETERMINED THAT THE POSITIONS OF CHIEF OF STATE
AND THE CHIEF OF THE ARMED FORCES WILL NOT BE HELD BY ONE
INDIVIDUAL, AS WAS THE CASE WITH GENERAL LOPEZ PRIOR TO MARCH 31.
SANCHEZ

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MANAGUA
SAN JOSE
SAN SALVADOR

USCINCSO

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